

# THE USAU YOUTH



“Africa’s future belongs to its young people... We need young Africans who are standing up and making things happen not only in their own countries but around the world”

**President Barack Obama**

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*“Youth are the drivers of the transformation of the agriculture of the continent. We want youth to be the leaders, the drivers, and the managers of this particular (CAADP) agenda on the continent.”*

**Mr. Boaz Keizire, Chief Adviser, CAADP,**  
African Union Commission

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## Editorial

**Dear Readers, 2014: the Year of Agriculture and Food Security** is in the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP)! This was a 2012 decision by African Union Heads of State. Our continent is facing a severe issues with food security, although it has the most arable land in the world. For Africa to grow, all actors are meant to focus, over the next decade, on agriculture productivity with emphasis on climate change mitigation and ensuring food and nutrition security, leading to sustainable economic growth through resilience and agricultural risk management. For this to happen, the African Union, under NEPAD and other organs, is working towards better land policy, rural infrastructure, regional trade and integration, public-private sector engagement, investment financing, and so forth. Thus, what is the youth perspective on this agenda? What needs to be done in this particular area to ensure the “prosperous” Africa we all want to see? Do we have capacity to engage the right institutions to contribute our strength and knowledge to move this agenda forward? In this issue, all articles emphasize themes from science and technology to CAADP, to women’s empowerment, to leading to youth employment generation on the continent, under the lenses both of opportunities and drivers. We aim to continue to reflect on topics that relate to the betterment of African youth and Africa! As always, your feedback is welcome and appreciated! **Happy reading!**

## GOOD TO KNOW

### Key Celebrations in USA

#### ⇒ Women's History Month, celebrated in March

Each March, we observe International Women's Day under the larger context of Women's History Month, as a time for programming and engagement that aims to protect and advance the rights of women and girls around the world. Women's History Month is vitally important because research shows that progress in women's employment, health, and education can lead to greater economic growth and stronger societies. Further evidence demonstrates that integrating women's perspectives into peace negotiations and security efforts helps prevent conflict and can lead to more durable peace agreements. Lastly, when women are equally empowered as political and social actors, governments are more representative and effective. (Source: USAU Youth Newsletter March-April 2013). Check out the [website of celebration here](#).

#### ⇒ Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), stressed in April

"... Leadership tomorrow depends on how we educate our students today—especially in science, technology, engineering and math."—President Barack Obama, Sept. 16, 2010

The Obama Administration stands committed to providing students at every level with the skills they need to excel in the high-paid, highly-rewarding fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). President Obama strongly believes that the United States must equip many more students to excel in that field of study. Emphasis is put on this field of study to foster amongst young people and encourage universities and others institutes in developing programs that can pave ways for creativity and innovation that will benefit the communities.

[Visit the White House dedicated website](#)

### •2014, the Year of Agriculture and Food Security " in Africa

As a decision of the African Union January summit, the Assembly of Heads of State has declared **2014 as "the Year of Agriculture and Food Security"** to mark the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture and Development Program (CAADP)" with focus on "Transforming Africa's Agriculture for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, through Harnessing opportunities for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development. Furthermore, the Assembly requested Member States, the Commission and NPCA along with stakeholders and development partners to scale up their collaboration towards sustaining of the CAADP momentum by focusing on agro-industry and entrepreneurship, access to land for small-holder farmers, women and youth, linkages between job creation, food security and nutrition, as well as lesson learning on CAADP accomplishments.

In nutshell, the CAADP commitments to Youth development can be summarized as follow: (1) acknowledging the desire of African Youth to be directly engaged in youth –related projects and programs, (2) Attaining goals and objectives of the African Youth Charter, the 10 Year Action Plan and the Medium Term Priority Actions (2009), and (3) Strengthening partnerships "Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development". Check out the [CAADP Policy here](#):



### ATTEND the African Youth Charter Summit 2014 !!!

*The African Youth Charter Summit (AYCS) is Zayrah's flagship annual program. Its overall aim is to encourage the Youth to know the structures that govern their lives.*

The first African Youth Charter Summit (AYCS) organized by Zayrah Africa was held in Dar es Salaam-Tanzania in July 2013 under the theme "The rise of a new generation of African leaders".

**AYCS 2014** expects to host Youth from all African countries and including those in the Diaspora. AYCS 2014 theme: *"Understanding the Economic and Political Landscape of Africa"*.

For more info, visit [Zayrah's website](#) or [Facebook page](#):

## CONTRIBUTION:

### Unemployment and varied Critical Challenges among African Youths: Major Repercussions and Common Debates in Africa



*Awa I. Ndah is the Founder and Executive Director of Impact Creators, and also is the co-founder and country coordinator of the African Youth Trainer's Network. Awa is a bilingual (English & French) non-profit management trainer/consultant, a social entrepreneur, a recognised youth leader and community activist, a leadership/career coach, a writer and a motivational speaker with more than 6 years on-the-ground professional experience. He has worked, consulted, volunteered and still does with different Cameroonian and international civil society organisations, youth groups/forums, Technical and Financial Partners in Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Turkey, UK, USA and Brazil.*

Unemployment is a current global challenge and its repercussions leave no one indifferent. The global economic crisis affected Africa's economy and it's slowly but steadily rebound suffered a serious blow during and after the Arab Spring. North African youths are the highest hit in Africa. ILO's Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013, states that North Africa *"has a youth unemployment rate as high as 23.7 per cent in 2012"* while the World Economic Forum's *Global Agenda Councils - Youth Unemployment Visualization 2013* puts unemployment rates in North Africa at 27.9% and in Sub-Saharan Africa at 11.5%. Undoubtedly and regrettably, Africa has the highest youth unemployment rate in the world. Unemployment is blighting a whole generation of youngsters in Africa. The socio-economic, political and psychosocial repercussions of unemployment are far-reaching particularly to the man in the street. In the face of economic stagnation and downtrend, financial uncertainty crowned by skyrocketing unemployment and underemployment, the future of the African youth leaves little or nothing to ride home with. And their populations just keep increasing. African Economic Outlook (AEO) estimates that there are *"almost 200 million people aged between 15 and 24 and that Africa has the youngest population in the world."* This number according to AEO *"...will double by 2045."*

To begin, it will be wise to define the term unemployment. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines the unemployed as *"numbers of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work."* Youth unemployment can therefore be defined as the conglomerate of youths with diverse background, willing and able to work, but cannot find any or cannot find the type of job that they are trained to do, and which they will be proud to do as per their area of expertise. It is unarguable that when the supply of labour outstrips the demand for labour, it causes joblessness and unemployment.

The general assumption is that democratically stabilised countries choose their political leaders freely and thus hold them accountable for decisions, be them socio-economic and/or political that backfire and/or cost the population their right to a prosperous and secured life. Apparent democratically stabilised countries in Africa still have an increasing number of angry and frustrated economically active young people without jobs and yet in most cases, their attempt for free gathering, free expression and advocacy is crushed by the iron fist of their political leaders. Cameroon, with a president who has been in power for over 3 decades is a glaring example of a youthful population with a growing sense of despondency.

Africa's most available and most important resource is its youths and most reside in urban areas. According to the UN-Habitat's State of Urban Youth Report, 2012-2013, *"there are more people under the age of 25 today than ever, totaling nearly three billion - or half of humankind - of which 1.3 billion between ages 12 and 24 with most live in urban areas."* The more unemployed and "working poor" —i.e., in unskilled, insecure employment, and in unsatisfactory conditions, the more problems particularly for the "1%". The rising youth population in Africa, or what is generally refer to as "urban youth bulge" are among the 90 million young people around the world who are unemployed (47 per cent of the total number of unemployed) with an additional 300 million "working poor." (UN-Habitat's State of Urban Youth Report, 2012-2013). Skills mismatch market demands.

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## USAU Youth Library



### Handbook: [Development Effectiveness & the Role of Civil Society Organizations](#)

**Authors:** Marton Leiszen & others

#### Excerpts:

“The key role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in addressing this paradigm shift, to which they also contributed, is to focus on poverty reduction and factors affecting development such as human rights, participatory democracy, social and environmental justice, sustainability and gender equality”

“Although the concept of development effectiveness does not have an agreed definition, the CSOs understand that it promotes sustainable change that addresses the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalization, through the use of diverse and complementary instruments, policies and actors”

“What have CSOs done themselves to enhance their development effectiveness?”

“The Istanbul Principles are essential principles that define and guide change for effective development practice by CSOs worldwide. Together with the International Framework, they were officially acknowledged by the Global Partnership in the 4th HLF in Busan and were thus given global legitimacy”.

Read More [here](#):

Octavio Diogo

### TIP OF THE MONTH:

#### Build a values-based Organization!

Many successful organizations agree upon and articulate their vision, mission or purpose, values, and strategies so all organization members can enroll in and own their achievement. Once defined, values impact every aspect of your organization. Why Identify and Establish Values?

Learn more [here](#)

### LEADERSHIP CORNER:

“If the *leader* is filled with high *ambition* and if he pursues his *aims* with *audacity* and *strength* of will, he will *reach* them in spite of all obstacles”

- Karl Von Clausewitz



⇒ [The International Conference on Leadership, Good Governance and Globalization](#) for 2014 will be taking place at the Hilton, Cape Town City Centre, South Africa between 21st and 22nd November, 2014 and is termed LeadgovI4. This year's conference theme is “Exploring the Best Leadership Practices and Latest Strategies for Sustaining a Measurable Advantage over the Long Term.”

The conference will bring into one venue competing ideas. For participation, exhibition, awards, partnership, sponsorship and enquiries contacts:

Email: [info@africanlegacyinternational.com](mailto:info@africanlegacyinternational.com)

Website: [www.africanlegacyinternational.com](http://www.africanlegacyinternational.com)

#### ⇒ [Girls impact the world film festival: call for entries](#)

Girls Impact the World Film Festival is now accepting submissions of 3-5 minute short films for consideration for the inaugural Girls Impact the World Film Festival presented by the Harvard College Social Innovation Collaborative (SIC) and Connector.org

Applicant(s) must be 25 or under on December 31, 2014 (special circumstances may be considered)

For more information, visit [the website](#)



Youth unemployment and underemployment in Sub-Saharan countries is cancerous and the primary cause is the corrupt, unfavorable and discriminatory policies of gerontocratic systems with unfettered control over most government branches. The Arab Spring proved that despite the dictatorial political systems in countries like Libya, Egypt and Tunisia where the youths were suppressed for so long, the increasing “battalion” of unemployed and peripheralised youths in Sub-Saharan Africa can also stir-up upheavals and unleash mayhem that will undermine the stability of democracy in most countries and change governments.

One of the major consequences of unemployment is the desperation and waywardness of youths, thus making them vulnerable cat's-paws for power mongering politicians. Maverick and disgruntled politicians exploit and use unemployed youths as political thugs to settle scores with opponents. All of this to the detriment of the youths. Like the popular African adage goes, “when two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers”. The utilization of the unemployed youths to perpetuate post elections violence often leads to lawlessness, political thuggery, intimidations, killings, maiming and unabated destruction of lives and property. Examples include Kenya 2010 and 2013, Cameroon 1990, Ivory Coast 2012, Nigeria 2011 and many other examples in Africa.

Furthermore, another implication of youth unemployment is the resurgence of urban urchins popularly called “nanga mboko” in Cameroon parlance or “area boys” in Nigeria parlance. This set of unemployed youths is mostly found in urban towns and cities across most States in Africa. This group survive anyway anyhow through activities like pick pocketing, robbery, inter alia. Besides, they can also be used by political “godfathers” for activities that could undermine democracy and electoral process such as ballot box stuffing and snatching, killing and maiming of political opponents. They are often equipped with weapons to breed terror to motorists, urban dwellers and inter urban travelers. Highway robbers in the Northern part of Cameroon are an example, though they are been chased out and even killed by the elite Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR).

In addition, there is an increase in the involvement of youths in various anti-social activities and offences as a result of unemployment. They include prostitution, sex slavery, occultism, rape, abduction, murder, drug trafficking and a lot more. In most cases, powerful politicians are behind these crimes and these youths who see the politicians as their godfathers often get away free at the mention of their godfather’s name to law enforcement officers. The markets are obviously affected as foreign investors scare away.

In Cameroon likewise Nigeria, Ghana amongst others, the current phenomenon of scamming within the youths is a big repercussion of unemployment and the government’s unfavorable and discriminatory economic policies. Thousands of degree holders with little or no professional work experience ramble the streets likewise other Africa urban cities unable to find gainful employment. The tendency now is they turn to wrongly explore ICTs by dubbing on the internet. Emerging world economies like the BRICS<sup>1</sup> Economic Block promote the technological and professional development of its youths but the case in Sub-Saharan Africa is different, cybercrimes. The youths cannot continue to be labelled with “inadequate and no professional working experience” by the “99 %” because if given a chance within an enabling and equitable environment, their resourcefulness and skills will be demonstrated.

Actors involve in the fight against unemployment and poverty include UN Member States, the African Union, the African Development Bank, Technical and Financial Partners like the World Bank, the European Union, UN Agencies, International and Non-governmental Organizations, Youth Associations, inter alia. Prominent past and current gatherings in and out of Africa to curb unemployment include the *12th International Economic Forum on Africa* organized by the OECD<sup>2</sup> Development Centre, in collaboration with the African Development Bank, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the UN Development Programme, and the French Ministry of Economy and Finance under the theme *Promoting Youth Employment: Making the Most of Africa’s Human Resources & Natural Wealth*. The conference took place in Paris, France on the 4 October 2012.

Also, regional and continental governments continue to meet to discuss solutions to youth unemployment in Africa.

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## A WORD TO THE WISE ::

Mr. Boaz Keizire, Chief Adviser, CAADP, African Union Commission



*Mr. Boaz Keizire is a senior policy officer at the African Union Commission, in charge of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) which is the AUC flagship policy in the Agriculture sector. He granted us an interview in the sake of the “2014: The year of the CAADP”. He shares with us the opportunities for and roles of youth in this continental agricultural Agenda.*

***We would like to get to know you a little better. Can you briefly tell us about your personal and professional background – focusing on your involvement in youth-led organizations thus far? Moreover, how does your work improve conditions for African Youth?***

I have been in the AUC for the last 4 years and half. I previously worked as Head of Agriculture planning and Director of planning in national planning authority the government in Uganda. I also have done some work with the World Bank. Well, a lot of the work I've been involved with has had a lot of interface with the youth. I've chaired a Youth volunteers program in Uganda, tried to make sure that *I've advocated for youth activities in national planning.*

In the area of Agriculture, we have a series of challenges because the history does not define well agriculture with the youth, given that in most societies it has been seen as a punishment for youth in rural areas, which created a sense of detest for youth. So we have been doing some working on how best attract the youth to agriculture and for rural development. And the most of this work has been on the other part of the value-chain using ICT applications and mobile banking among others. We continue to look at different innovations and ideas in that sense and hope to succeed in attracting the youth in agricultural development.

***What does the CAADP stand for and what is its role in the continental development?***

CAADP stands for Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program. It's initiated within the NEPAD Agenda to respond issues of poverty reduction, food security in Africa. As you may know, in the continent, agriculture is small holder-driven. So CAADP intended to create knowledge on how to tackle issues of rural poverty and ensuring further food security. Thus African leaders agreed to commit this framework to do so by using CAADP as an instrument.

It has to be clear: *CAADP is a framework so a set of principles and not a program* although the “P” at its end is defined as Program so CAADP is used and should be seen as a brand.

***The African Union Heads of States have declared 2014 the year of the CAADP. Why this level of interest and how does it bring about changes in practice?***

The declaring of the year 2014 as a year of agriculture has been made in 2012 when reviewing the progress of the CAADP and agriculture over the last 10 years, CAADP review of 10 years was fitting in 2013 which coincided with the 50th celebration of the OAU. The leaders noticed that combining the both important celebrations could lead to the loss of attention on agriculture and food security issues. So they made the decision to shift 1 year ahead and so they made 2014 the year of agriculture.

That concretely means that they would like spend more time to reflect on the progress, the failure and successes of agriculture over the last 10 years, to understand the science and technology and others political drivers that have made the agriculture sector either grow or failed in the view of the next decade. This is to make more grounded and widen consultations among leaders and over actors, see more opportunities in order to decide for the next decade.

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*What do you think are youth opportunities with CAADP? Moreover, what do you think African Youth responsibilities may be on this matter and also the channel available for them to engage with you?*

The next decade of the CAADP will emphasis a number of what we have originally neglected. In the past the role of youth and women was in my view taken for granted, but unless there are specific clear programs targeting youth the delivery of agriculture objectives are going to be compromised if we do not have direct programs that are attractive to the Youth. The good news is that the next decade of the CAADP implementation is going to be embracing more what we call “implementation around the value-chain”: increasing production productivity but looking it from the value-chain, investment, financing, agribusiness and all the technology involved. With that, there are a lot of innovations, technology, applications that will be required and attract youth.

*We would like to work with the youth to drive and to be able define what they actually want, as we are moving away from conventional approaches of planning for youth groups on their behalf, rather than giving them opportunity to plan for themselves.* This is why we are looking into having in all the key platforms, special desk, special face, special engagement for the Youth, creating for them panels to voice their thinking and what they are able to. And among others, this is creating financial mechanisms with catalytic funds.

We definitively want them to take the ownership of this Agenda as a channel for them to engage with us, we’ve started at country level to agree to develop what we call “*Youth volunteers into the CAADP agenda*’. We build national networks based on sub-regional areas, they have converted at the national level and we also want to make sure that they are linked to regional networks as well as the continental youth network.

So, in all the meetings we will be having, we will be creating special attention to the youth to voice out and if there is a specific investment area, we should be able to mobilize resources for them and therefore, they own, they drive, they lead the Agenda.

*We like to end each of our interviews with a “words to the wise” or an opportunity for you, as the interviewee, to offer a word of wisdom to those who are wise enough to hear it. So, what has inspired you?*

You are as old as how you feel. If you work and you feel that you are tired you will feel old. But you can be 70 years and feel like a 30 year old.; after all age is just a number. Youth are the drivers of the transformation of the agriculture of the continent. We want the Youth to be the leaders, the drivers and the managers of this particular agenda on the continent. While giving it to the youth, we’ll support them as we are part of Youth anyway because that’s how we feel and we’ll work with them all the way. *We will walk the talk.*

**Interviewed by Octavio Diogo**

Also, regional and continental governments continue to meet to discuss solutions to youth unemployment in Africa. On 18th February 2009 in Addis Ababa, African heads of state declared 2009-2019 as the decade of youth development in Africa. They resolved to advance youth development and ensure increased investments in youth development programmes at national levels. The hitherto declaration was reviewed on July 1st 2011, when the heads of state and government met in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea to discuss the need to ‘Accelerate Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development’. They reinforced the Addis Ababa 2009 declaration and promised ‘creation of safe, decent and competitive employment opportunities’. The “*African Youth Decade Plan of Action (2009 – 2019)*” is the blueprint “*Road Map towards the implementation of The African Youth Charter.*” More so, in July 2012, the African Development Bank facilitated a policy dialogue on *Youth Employment for the Southern African region*, chaired by its Vice President Prof Mthuli Ncube.

In a nutshell, addressing youth unemployment in Africa requires an integrated holistic approach. Shortcuts to satisfy political gains have proven futile and will not work. The World Bank 2008 report advocates for “*a comprehensive model that caters for rural development, rural-urban migration, preparation of young people for the labour market and investments in agriculture.*” Educational curriculums have to be revised and decision makers promote and/or institutionalise volunteerism and paid internships.

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Thank you.

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